

# **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ESTABLISHING SECURITY SCANNER ATTRIBUTES IN A COMPUTER SYSTEM**

## **ABSTRACT**

One embodiment of the present invention provides a system that establishes a list of security scanner attributes for a computing node within a hierarchy of computing nodes. The list of security scanner attributes is associated with a security scanner action to be performed by a security scanner program. The system establishes a hierarchy of lists of attributes, with each attribute being comprised of an attribute identifier and an attribute value. The attribute value may be either a list of attributes or a controlling value used by the security scanner program to control the operation of the security scanner program. The list of attributes also has a grouping attribute which indicates: that an element of the list may be updated without also updating other elements in the list; that updating an element requires all other elements of the list to be updated; or that updating the element requires the element, all other elements, and all subordinate elements of the list of attributes to be updated.